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U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Chicago District Office

Investigative Interviewing Techniques: General Principles and Adapting for Trauma

August 16, 2023

12:30 pm – 3:00 pm ET

11:30 am – 2:00 pm CT

AGENDA

Time	Presentation
11:00 am	Virtual Environment Opens
11:30 am	Opening Remarks Diane Smason, Acting District Director, EEOC Chicago District Office
11:40 am	Get it Right the First Time: General Principles for Effective Investigative Interviews Maria Flores, Lead Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Chicago District Office <p>A good investigation is only as good as the person conducting it. Knowing the proper and various investigative interviewing techniques and when to use them prevents us from filling the gaps in an investigation with our own opinions. This session will focus on the different tools to use that can help or hurt the process. Attendees will understand when to ask certain questions and how to get the relevant information the first time.</p>
12:40 pm	Break
12:50 pm	Trauma-Informed Interviewing: Striking a Balance between Critical Thinking and Empathy Nanisa Pereles, Program Analyst, EEOC Office of Field Programs, Field Management Programs <p>Conducting investigations in today's workplaces requires a balance of critical thinking and empathy. It is essential that factfinders be prepared to encounter difficult, sensitive, or challenging scenarios. Often, a person subjected to trauma may have difficulty recalling events, may be afraid to share information, or may not appear to be credible. Because trauma affects everyone differently, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. This session will provide practical tools for navigating those interactions while maintaining a trauma-informed mindset.</p>
1:50 pm	Additional Questions and Closing Remarks
2:00 pm	Adjourn

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REGISTRATION FEE: \$145.00 per person

ENROLL HERE: [Chicago Virtual Workshop](#)

CREDITS:

HRCI – This program has been submitted to the HR Certification Institute for review.

SHRM – submitted for approval.

CLE – seeking credits for IA, MN, ND, and WI. This program is not eligible for CLE credits by the Illinois Minimum Continuing Legal Education Board.

This workshop is pending approval for Federal Counselor or Investigator Refresher credits.

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PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES



Maria Flores, Lead Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Chicago District Office

Maria Flores is a 31-year veteran of the EEOC. As a former bilingual/systemic investigator she was twice awarded Chair awards for her investigation and successful resolution of high-profile class cases which had national impact and significant litigation results. For the past 22 years Maria has coordinated and conducted DEI training, outreach, and technical assistance on a national and regional level. She has a proven record as a highly rated speaker and trainer to diverse audiences on numerous employment discrimination issues. Maria received her B.A. from Marquette University and received the national MU alumni "Person for Others" award in 2019.



Nanisa Pereles, Program Analyst, EEOC Office of Field Programs, Field Management Programs

Nanisa S. Pereles is a Program Analyst at EEOC. She has served as Supervisory Investigator coaching teams of investigators involved in all types of employment discrimination cases. On a national level, Nanisa has trained and mentored EEO Investigators; served as an EEO trainer for both internal and external customers; and is part of the national development teams for investigative training and compliance materials. Nanisa is a graduate of the Partnership for Public Service Leadership Program. She received a Bachelor of Science in Communications from Southwestern Oklahoma State University and a Master of Arts in Communications from Oklahoma State University.



Diane Smason, Acting District Director, EEOC Chicago District Office

Diane I. Smason is currently serving as Acting District Director of the Chicago District Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Ms. Smason became deputy director in January 2020, having started as an EEOC trial attorney in 1998. Ms. Smason oversees the Enforcement, ADR, Federal Sector Hearings, Outreach and Education, and State, Local, & Tribal Programs for the district's offices in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Minnesota. The Chicago District includes the states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. While an EEOC attorney, she litigated and supervised a wide variety of matters, including class and systemic cases, under Title VII, the ADA, and the ADEA. She regularly speaks about the EEOC and all areas of federal employment discrimination law.

Prior to the EEOC, Ms. Smason was an associate at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal in Chicago practicing labor and employment law and general commercial litigation. Ms. Smason also served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Bernard A. Friedman of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Ms. Smason attended the University of Michigan Law School and has a B.A. in English and Political Science from the University of Pennsylvania.

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